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ABSTRACT

A study examined employment screening interviews to determine the relationships between an interviewee's perceptions of interview communication satisfaction, interviewer credibility and trust, previous interviewing experiences, and a number of interview outcomes, including expectation of a second interview. Data were collected from 69 students interviewing at a university business placement office subsequent to actual employment interviews. The results indicated that an interviewee's previous interview experiences, the status of the interviewer, and whether the interviewee was later offered a second interview did not significantly affect perceptions of interview communication satisfaction or interviewer credibility and trust. However, those persons who expected a second interview differed significantly on a number of perceptual dimensions from those who did not expect such an interview. The findings suggest that interview communication satisfaction is most strongly related to expectation of a second interview offer. (FL)

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# Interviewee Perceptions of Employment Screening Interviews: Relationships Among Perceptions of Communication Satisfaction, Interviewer Credibility and Trust, Interviewing Experience, and Interview Outcomes

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# Interviewee Perceptions of Employment Screening Interviews: Relationships Among Perceptions of Communication Satisfaction, Interviewer Credibility and Trust, Interviewing Experience, and Interview Outcomes

An organization's viability is, to a large degree, dependent on the caliber of personnel it recruits. For that reason traditional recruitment and selection research has focused on methods by which organizations can identify and select promising candidates, or methods by which applicants can enhance their attractiveness to an organization (e.g., Porter, Lawler & Hackman, 1975). Until recently, research has tended to ignore the fact that both organizations and job candidates are concerned with attraction and selection (e.g., Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980). This appears to be particularly true of the employment interviewing literature, where the focus has been on interviewer questioning strategies and decision making processes and on successful job candidate behaviors (e.g., Mayfield, 1964; Wright, 1969; Daly, 1978), and not on how interviewee's evaluate interviewer behaviors and make decisions about potential employment with an interviewer's organization.

As noted above, the recruitment process, from the organization's perspective, involves the attraction of individuals to the organization whose abilities match organizational job requirements. This process begins with the individual's first formal interpersonal contact with the organization. For most, this initial contact with the organization occurs during the employment screening interview. Although the screening interview is perhaps a superficial exposure to the

organization, it is nevertheless crucial in the formulation and development of a relationship between the recruit and the organization (e.g., Rynes, et al, 1980). As Wanous (1980, p.107) observes, "If individuals get 'turned off' at the initial contact with a company they are much less likely to continue seeking employment there." Obviously, from the organization's and individual's perspectives, first impressions count, and it is during the screening interview that these impressions are likely to initially emerge.

Since interviewers are often the first sources of organizational information for job candidates they play an important role in attracting promising candidates to their organizations. More specifically, an interviewee's perceptions of and attraction to a recruiter's organization are likely to be affected by the degree to which the applicant views the interviewer as a credible and trustworthy source of information. While few studies have looked explicitly at interviewees' perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, research which has indirectly explored these issues supports the above position. For example, research has shown that college student ratings of their "best" interviews are highly correlated with their perceptions of interviewer supportiveness and "favorable" personality traits (Sutton & Carleton, 1962; Alderfer & McCord, 1970). Other studies have shown that interviewee ratings of interviewer competence, impressions of the interviewer's organization, and acceptance of a job offer are significantly related to perceptions of interviewer warmth and thoughtfulness (e.g., Schmitt & Coyle, 1976). Further, investigations have shown that interviewee perceptions of interviewers are affected by

the interviewer's speech fluency (Carlson, Thayer, Mayfield & Peterson, 1971; Rogers & Sincoff, 1978), enthusiasm (Washburn & Hakel, 1973), "cordial" interpersonal relations (Downs, 1969), experience (Carlson, et al., 1971), and willingness to discuss negative information about the job or organization (Fisher, Ilgen & Hower, 1979). Moreover, (non-interviewing) research has demonstrated that when one perceives a message source as credible and/or trustworthy one is likely to accept and believe communications from that source (e.g., Hovland, Janis & Kelly, 1953; Giffin, 1967; Redding, 1972); Wheeles & Grotz, 1977).

It is also likely that an applicant's attraction to an interviewer's organization is affected by the degree to which the applicant finds the screening interview to be a satisfying interpersonal experience. In particular, the degree to which the interviewee finds his/her interaction with the interviewer to be a satisfying communication event should effect his/her perceptions of the interviewer and the organization she/he represents. While no studies have explicitly explored the relationships between an interviewee's perception of communication satisfaction and interview outcomes, several related investigations have found that an applicant's reaction to an interview, in terms of his/her overall satisfaction, affects the likelihood that the recruit will accept a job offer from the company (e.g., Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976).

The lack of research into the effects of an applicant's satisfaction with communication in the screening interview is probably due, in part, to the fact that until recently little research has been

directed at either theoretically or empirically delineating the interpersonal communication satisfaction construct. However, Hecht (1978) has lately provided a rigorous conceptualization of the construct and developed a self-report instrument to measure it. Hecht's "discriminative fulfillment approach" to communication satisfaction is grounded in expectation fulfillment principles (e.g., Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969), and Skinner's (1953) operant conditioning theory. As a result, communication satisfaction is viewed as a byproduct of environmental reinforcement (e.g., by the interviewer) of information provided by the subject (e.g., the interviewee) to discriminative stimuli presented by the environment (e.g., the interviewer).

An interviewee's perceptions of an interviewer and the organization he/she represents may also be affected by the interviewee's previous interviewing experiences, as well as by status characteristics of the organizational representative (e.g., Rynes, et al., 1980). For example, applicants who have participated in many screening interviews have a broader spectrum of "comparison others" (Festinger, 1954), by which to judge an interviewer, and thus may have more "realistic" perceptions of an interviewer's capabilities, as well as the degree to which an interview can be a satisfying interpersonal communication event.

Other research has shown that status characteristics of an interviewer can affect interviewee perceptions of that individual. For example, Rogers and Sincoff (1978) have found that when an interviewer is identified by the title "Recruiting Director" applicant impressions of him/her are more favorable than when the person is introduced merely

by name alone. A recent study by Fisher, Ilgen and Hoyer (1979) supports this status effect in that they found that interviewees' perceived formal recruiters as less likable, knowledgeable, and trustworthy sources of information than interviewers who were job incumbants. Extrapolating upon the above studies, it seems reasonable to expect that an interviewer who is identified to the applicant as a recruiter versus a representative of the department that is hiring the new employee, will be perceived as a less credible by the applicant and will likely be perceived as less satisfying communicator during the interview.

## The Present Study

In light of the research and literature reviewed in the preceding section, the present investigation attempted to determine the relationships between an interviewee's perceptions of (1) interview communication satisfaction, (2) interviewer credibility and trust, and (3) previous interviewing experience (i.e., number of screening interviews and "on-site" interviews the interviewee had already participated in, degree of interviewing training) on a number of interview outcomes (i.e., expectations of a second or "on-site" interview with the interviewer's company, whether or not the interviewee actually received an offer of a second interview, and interviewee ratings of the quality of the interview). Specifically, the following research questions were posed:

$Q_1$: Subsequent to a screening interview, do interviewees who expect a second (or on-site) interview with their interviewers' companies, or actually receive a second interview offer, or rate the interview as high in quality differ significantly from those interviewees who have opposite perceptions/experiences, in respect to perceptions of their interviewers' credibility and trust, and the degree to which they found their interviews to be satisfying interpersonal communication events?

$Q_2$: Do interviewees who have participated in a considerable number of screening interviews, or a considerable number of second or on-site interviews, or have received a considerable amount of interview training differ significantly from those interviewees who have not had these experiences, in respect to perceptions (subsequent to actual screening interviews) of their interviewers' credibility and trust, and the degree to which they found their interviews to be satisfying interpersonal communication events?

$Q_{2a}$: Do interviewees who interview with interviewers who identify themselves as members of their organizations' personnel/ employee relations staffs differ in their perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, and interview satisfaction, from those interviewees who interview with interviewers who are representatives of the departments in which the new employee will work?

$Q_3$: To what extent are the combination of an interviewee's perceptions of an interviewer's credibility and trust, and her/his perceptions of an interview as a satisfying interpersonal communication experience, predictive of expectations of a second interview with the interviewer's organization?

## Methodology

### Research Setting

Data were collected at the Business Placement Center at a large southwestern university. During the previous academic year (1979-1980) approximately 1900 students participated in one or more interviews with the 610 organizations that interviewed student applicants at the placement center. In total, approximately 18,000 interviews were conducted at the placement center during 1979-1980. The students who interviewed at the placement center can be characterized as follows: (1) 60% of the interviewees were male while 40% were female; (2) 80% of the interviewees were undergraduate students while the remainder were graduate students or alumni; (3) (8% of those persons interviewing at the center were caucasion with only 10% being older than 40 years of age.

### Subjects

The participants in this study were 69 undergraduate students interviewing for a wide variety of entry level positions in various

occupational fields, e.g., accounting (20%), sales(20%), personnel management (21%), finance (11%). Of the subjects from whom data were collected 65% were male and 35% were female. The median number of screening interviews that an S had participated in at the placement center (to that point in time) was 9.6; the average student applicant had received 1.8 second (or on-site) interview offers.

Procedures

Participants in the study interviewed with organizational representatives in rooms designed for this purpose at the placement center. Subsequent to their interviews subjects were approached by one of the researchers and asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning their impressions of the interviews in which they had just participated. Of those individuals approached, 96% agreed to complete the questionnaire. Interviewees were then led to a room a short distance away and filled out the research questionnaire. However, prior to completing the instrument, all Ss were asked if they had any previous knowledge that a study of this nature was being conducted. No subject had previous knowledge of the investigation or its goals.

The questionnaire. Except for determination of whether or not the interviewee had actually received a second interview offer, the questionnaire that interviewees completed subsequent to their interviews contained both the independent and dependent measures for this research. Specifically, this instrument (among other things) contained the following measures: interview quality, communication satisfaction, interviewer credibility (composed of five dimensions--competence,

sociability, extroversion, composure, character), interviewer trustworthiness, interview experiences (training, number of screening interviews, number of second or on-site interviews), and an item identifying the interviewer as either "recruiter" or representative of the department in which the new employee would work. Each of these measures is described below as either an independent or dependent variable in this research. However, it should be noted that some of these measures served as both independent and dependent variables in the investigation, depending upon the research question that was being answered.

Independent variables. Subjects' expectations of a second interview were obtained by asking them to estimate on a five-point, Likert-type scale the likelihood that they would receive a second interview with the interviewer's company (1=very likely, 5=very unlikely). Quality ratings of the interviews were determined by responses to three, five-point Likert-type items concerned with the performance of the interviewee and the interviewer. One of these items also asked the interviewee to rate the interview in comparison to other interviews s/he had participated in during that school year. A factor analysis (Principal Components-Varimax Rotation) of this three item interview quality scale indicated that it was unidimensional, while a reliability analysis showed that it was internally consistent (Cronbach's alpha=.79). The amount of interview training a subject had experienced was assessed by her/his response to a single item, five-point, Likert-type scale concerning this issue (1=none at all, 5=a very great deal). In order to determine the organizational position of

the interviewer, respondents were asked to indicate whether the interviewer was a member of the organization's personnel/employee relations staff, or a member of the department in which the new employee would work. Only fourteen subjects (19%) were uncertain of the interviewer's organizational position. The number of interviews that applicants had participated in at the placement center to that point in the school year was assessed by two open-ended questions. One of these questions queried about the number of screening interviews the applicant had participated in, while the other asked about the number of second interview offers the interviewee had received. Finally, whether or not an interviewee had actually received a second interview offer from the company with which s/he had interviewed (on the day the questionnaire data was collected), was determined by contacting the interviewee by phone approximately 4-6 weeks subsequent to the initial collection of data.

Dependent variables. The major dependent variables in the study were the interviewees' perceptions of their interviewers' credibility and trust, and interviewees' perceptions of communication satisfaction with the interview. Perceptions of interviewer credibility were measured by scales adapted from McCroskey, Jensen, Todd, and Toomb (1972) specifically designed for the measurement of the credibility of organizational sources. Five dimensions of credibility were measured on five-point, semantic differential type scales: competence (7 items), character (4 items), sociability (7 items), extroversion (7 items), and composure (3 items). Each of these five credibility dimensions were separately factor analyzed to assure that they were unidimensional in

structure. Results of these factor analyses (Principal Components-Varimax Rotation) indicated that competence (v=54.6), character (v=62.1), sociability (v=61.3), and composure (v=62.0 were unidimensional. However, the factor analysis of the extroversion scale yielded two dimensions: an energy factor (v=57.4, items: energetic-tired, meek-aggressive, and timid-bold), and a talkativeness factor (v=64.8, items: talkative-silent, passive-active, verbal-quiet, and extroverted-introverted). Reliability analyses on the scales indicated that most met acceptable standards for internal consistency (Competence, alpha=,86; character, alpha=.76; composure, alpha=.67; sociability, alpha=.88; energy, alpha=.64; talkativeness, alpha=.82).

The trust measure was derived from Wheeles and Grotz (1977). Subjects responded to an abbreviated nine item version of this scale on five-point, semantic differential-type scales. A factor analysis of the scale yielded a unidimensional factor structure (v=.52.6), while a reliability analysis showed that the scale was internally consistent (Cronbach's alpha=.88).

The communication satisfaction scale was adapted from Hecht (1978). A seventeen item version of Hecht's Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory was employed in the present investigation. These seventeen items were factor analyzed (Principal Components-Varimax Rotation), and resulted in a two-factor solution. Since Hecht claims the construct is unidimensional, three items which were loading significantly on both factors were removed, and the resulting fourteen item scale was again factor analyzed. Results of this analysis yielded a

unidimensional factor solution (v=57.4), which also proved to be extremely reliable (Cronbach's alpha=.94).

Data Analysis

The first research question contained three parts or sub-questions. However, for each of these subquestions the same dependent variables were examined, i.e., interviewee perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, and perceptions of communication satisfaction with the interviewer. The first subquestion inquired whether or not those interviewees who expected, and those who did not expect a second interview offer, differed in their responses to the dependent variables. In order to answer this question subjects' responses to the questionnaire item concerning likelihood of receiving a second interview were trichotomized into three groups: (1) likely, (2) unlikely, and (3) uncertain, about being offered a second interview. Subjects who responded to the questionnaire item with "very likely" and "likely" were categorized into the likely group (n=32), subjects who responded to the item with "unlikely" and "very unlikely" were categorized into the unlikely group (n=13), while those who responded "uncertain" to this item were placed in the uncertain group (n=24). The data were then analyzed by a three groups, one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). A MANOVA was used for this analysis (and those that follow) since the dependent variables were significantly correlated with one another (median correlation $\underline{r}$=.42).

The second part of the first research question asked whether or not those persons who actually received a second interview offer differed on

their responses to the dependent variables from those who did not receive a second interview offer. Since it was not possible to determine if three of the subjects had ever received or not received a second interview offer, only 66 interviewees were included in the data analysis for this question. These data were analyzed by a two groups (received a second interview offer (n=15), did not receive an offer (n=51)), one-way MANOVA. The last part of the first research question asked if those interviewees who rated their interviews as high in quality differed in their responses to the dependent variables from those who rated their interviews as low in quality. In order to answer this question, a median-split on subjects' responses to the interview quality measure was computed ($\bar{x}$ = 10.72, sd=2.40, median=10.80, skewness=.12). As a result of the median split two groups were created: (1) persons who perceived their interviews as high in quality ($\bar{x}$ =13.03, sd=1.35, n=29), and (2) persons who perceived their interviews as low in quality ($\bar{x}$=9.14, sd=1.50, n=40). These data were then analyzed by a two groups (high quality, low quality), one-way MANOVA.

The second research question also contained three sub-questions. However, for each of these sub-dimensions the same dependent variables were examined, i.e., interviewee perceptions of credibility and trust, and perceptions of communication satisfaction with the interview. The first sub-question was answered by a two-groups, one-way MANOVA. The first sub-question asked whether or not those persons who had participated in a considerable number of screening interviews rated their interviewers on the dependent variables differently from those persons who had not participated in a large number of interviews. The

"many screening interviews" and "not many screening interviews" groups were created by performing a median split (median=9.63) on responses to the item within the questionnaire which asked subjects the number of screening interviews in which they had participated.

The second and third parts of the second question were answered by three-groups, one-way MANOVAs. The second sub-question asked if the number of second interviews a person had experienced affected his/her perceptions of the dependent variables. In order to answer this question subjects' responses to the item on the questionnaire related to this issue were trichotomized into three groups based on the distribution of scores: (1) no second interviews (n=16), (2) one or two second interviews (n=26), and (3) three or more second interviews (n=27). The last sub-question queried whether or not the degree to which interviewees had participated in interview training affected their perceptions of the dependent variables. In order to answer this question interviewees' responses to the questionnaire item concerning extent of interviewing training were trichotomized into three groups: (1) considerable training (n=18), (2) some training (n=19), and (3) inconsiderable training (n=31). Subjects who responded to the questionnaire item with "quite a bit" or "a very great deal" were categorized into the considerable group, subjects who responded with "some" were categorized into the "some" group, while those responding with "little" or "none at all" were classified into the inconsiderable group.

Question 2a asked if the organizational status of the interviewer affected interviewee responses to the dependent variables. This

question was answered by a two groups, one-way MANOVA where the two groups were: (1) interviewer was a representative of his/her organization's personnel/employee relations staff (n=22), or (2) interviewer was a representative of the department hiring the new employee (n=33).

The third research question attempted to determine the degree to which interviewee perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, and perceptions of communication satisfaction, were predictive of expectations of a second interview with the interviewer's organization. Originally it was intended that this question be answered by a step-wise multiple regression analysis. However, because of an extreme degree of multicollinearity among the independent variables, a regression analysis was not possible. Rather, zero-order correlations were used to help answer this research question. Specifically, correlations among interviewee perceptions of interview communication satisfaction, interviewer trust, composite measures of "credibility" and "extroversion," and expectations of a second interview offer were examined. The composite measures of credibility and trust were created as a result of a factor analysis of the credibility subscales. This analysis (Principle Components-Varimax Rotation) resulted in a two factor solution. The first of these factors, labeled "credibility" (v=48.4) was composed of sociability, character, composure and competence, while the second factor (v=20.9) was composed of the two extroversion subscales.

The alpha level for all statistical tests were set at the .05 level of significance. Significant effects within the MANOVAs were explored by examination of the univariate F-ratios and related univariate statistical probing procedures.

## Results

### Question 1

The first research questions asked if interviewees who (1) expect a second interview , or (2) actually receive a second interview offer, or (3) rate their interviews as high in quality differ from those interviewees who have opposite perceptions/experiences, in respect to perceptions of interview communication satisfaction and interviewer trust and credibility. The first part of the question was answered by a 1x3 MANOVA(likely, unlikely, uncertain about receiving a second interview). Results of the MANOVA yielded a significant multivariate main effect ($F=2.54$, $df=16,118$, $p<.002$, $R^2=.45$). However, an examination of the univariate F-ratios indicated that only interview communication satisfaction ($F=11.88$, $df=2, 66$, $p<.00004$, $eta=.51$), and interviewer composure were significant ($F=3.15$, $df=2, 66$, $p<.05$, $eta=.30$). Interviewer competence ($F=2.69$, $df=2,66$, $p<.08$, $power=.51$) and interviewer trust ($F=2.38$, $df=2, 66$, $p<.10$, $power=.46$) were the only other dependent variables approaching statistical significance. Table 1 reports the means and standard deviations for interviewee perceptions of interviewer trust and credibility, and interview communication satisfaction for the three levels of expectations of a second interview offer.

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Table 1 About Here

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Newman-Kuels multiple comparison tests were computed across the means for the two univariate main effects. Results of these tests showed that persons who perceived that it was likely they would receive a second interview offer ($\bar{x}$=27.00) were significantly more satisfied with their interviews as communication interactions than those who were uncertain about an offer ($\bar{x}$=32.42), and those who felt an offer was unlikely ($\bar{x}$=43.00). In turn, those who felt a second interview offer was uncertain were more satisfied with the communication in their interviews than those interviewees who believed a second interview was unlikely. Finally, the tests across the composure means showed that interviewees who perceived that it was likely they would receive a second interview offer ($\bar{x}$=5.34) felt their interviewers were more composed than those interviewees who felt an offer was uncertain ($\bar{x}$=6.75).

The second part of the first research question was answered by a 1x2 MANOVA (did, or did not actually receive a second interview offer). Results of the MANOVA yielded a non-significant multivariate F-ratio ($F=1.16$, $df=8, 57$, $p<.34$, $R^2=.14$). Moreover, none of the univariate F-ratios were even close to being statistically significant. Means and standard deviations for the dependent variables for the actual interview outcome of receiving a second interview offer are presented in Table 1.

The final part of the first research question was also answered by a 1x2 MANOVA (high or low interview quality). Results of this analysis yielded a significant multivariate main effect ($F=7.14$, $df=8, 60$, $p < .00001$, $R^2=.49$). Further, all the univariate F-ratios were significant (Trust: $R=9.30$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.003$, $eta=.35$; Competence: $F=16.71$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.0001$, $eta=.45$; Character: $F=9.97$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.002$, $eta=.36$; Composure: $F=4.61$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.04$, $eta=.25$; Sociability: $F=7.75$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.007$, $eta=.32$; Energy: $F=6.49$, $df=1, 67$. $p<.01$, $eta=.30$; Communication Satisfaction: $F=53.66$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.00001$, $eta=.67$) except for interviewer talkativeness ($F=3.14$, $df=1, 67$, $p<.08$, power=.42). Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across the two levels of interview quality.

Question 2

The second research question asked if interviewees who had: (1) participated in a considerable number of screening interviews, or (2) second (on-site) interviews, or (3) received a considerable amount of interview training differed from those interviewees who had not had those experiences, in respect to perceptions of interview communication satisfaction and interviewer trust and credibility. The first part of this question was answered by a 1x2 MANOVA (many, not many screening interviews). Results of this MANOVA revealed a non-significant multivariate main effect ($F=.92$, $df=8, 60$, $p<.51$, $R^2=.11$). None of the univariate F-ratios were close to approaching significance. Means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across the two levels of number of screening interviews are reported in Table 2.

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Table 2 About Here

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The second part of the research question was answered by a 1x3 MANOVA (none, 1-2, 3 or more second interviews). Results of this anaylsis also yielded a non-significant multivariate main effect ($F=.89$, $df=16, 118$, $p<.58$, $R^2=.20$). However, examination of the univariate F-ratios did indicate a significant effect for composure ($F=4.47$, $df=2, 66$, $p<.02$, eta=.35). Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across the three levels of number of second interviews.

The last part of the second research question was also answered by a 1x3 MANOVA (considerable,some, inconsiderable training). Results of the MANOVA yielded a non-significant multivariate main effect ($F=.96$, $df=16, 116$, $p<.50$, $R^2=.02$). Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across the three levels of interview training.

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Table 3 About Here

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Question 2a

Question 2a asked if interviewees perceive differential levels of interviewer credibility and trust, and interview communication satisfaction, when they interviewed with personnel representatives versus persons from the departments in which the new employee will work. This question was answered by a 1x2 MANOVA (Personnel Representative,

Representative of hiring department). Results of this analysis revealed a non-significant multivariate F-ratio ($F=1.03$, $df=8, 46$, $p<.43$, $R^2=.15$). Among the univariate F-ratios, only competence ($F=3.04$, $df=1, 64$, $p<.09$, power=.40) approached significance. Means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across the two levels of interviewer status are presented in Table 3.

Question 3

The last research question attempted to determine the extent to which interviewee perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, and interview communication satisfaction, were predictive of an interviewee's expectations of a second interview with an interviewer's organizaton. As noted earlier, a regression analysis was orginally planned to answer this question. However, because of multicollinearity among the dependent variables (see Table 4 for zero-order correlations among the independent and dependent variables).

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Table 4 About Here

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a regression analysis was not possible. In its place, zero-order correlations were computed between expectations of a second interview and: (1) a composite of credibility dimensions (see "data analysis" section), (2) extroversion, (3) interview trust, and (4) interview communication satisfaction. These correlations showed significant associations between interviewer trust ($r=.21$, $p<.05$), and interview communication satisfaction ($r=.54$, $p<.001$) and the likelihood of being

offered a second interview. Credibility ($r$=.17) and extroversion ($r$=.17) were not significantly correlated with expectations of a second interview offer.

## Discussion

This study attempted to determine for the employment screening interview the relationships among an interviewee's perceptions of interview communication satisfaction, interviewer credibility and trust, previous interviewing experiences, and a number of interview outcomes. The results of the investigation suggest that an interviewee's interviewing experiences (i.e., number of previous screening interviews, number of previous offers of second or on-site interviews, and extent of interviewing training) have little effect on his/her perceptions of interview communication satisfaction or interviewer credibility and trust. Moreover, findings indicate that interviewee perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, and interview communication satisfaction, are not significantly affected by whether one interviews with a "recruiter" (personnel department representative) or a member of the department hiring the new employee. However, data analyses did show that those persons who expected a second interview offer perceived their interviewers as more "composed" and evidenced higher levels of interview communication satisfaction than interviewees who did not expect or were uncertain about an offer. Yet, the results also revealed that those persons who actually received a second interview offer did not differ significantly on any of the dependent variables from those who did not receive an offer. In addition, interviewees who rated their interviews as high in quality perceived their interviewers to be more credible

(except for talkativeness) and trustworthy, and felt more satisfied with their interviews as communication interactions, than those persons who rated their interviews as lower in quality. Finally, results of correlational analyses showed that only interviewee perceptions of interviewer trustworthiness and competence, and feelings of interview communication satisfaction were significantly associated with expectations of a second interview offer, i.e., almost all the dimensions of interviewer credibility were not significantly related to expectations of a second interview.

The results of this research suggest some interesting conclusions. Probably most interesting is the fact that interviewees who actually received second interview offers and those that didn't showed no significant differences in their responses to any of the dependent measures. On the other hand, individuals who expected second interviews and those who didn't differed significantly on several of the dependent measures and approached significance on two others. Moreover, a supplemental analysis revealed that while 81% of those persons who actually received a second interview offer accurately predicted it (the others were uncertain), only 24% of those persons not receiving an offer accurately predicted that outcome (41% predicted an offer and 35% were uncertain). In other words, people who didn't get second interview offers were not very good at predicting that outcome, whereas those persons who did get offers were quite accurate in predicting that outcome.

In summary, the above findings appear to indicate that interviewees' differential perceptions of interviewer credibility and

trust, and interview communication satisfaction, may be a result of unrealistic versus realistic perceptions about interview outcomes. Given that most previous studies in this area have employed expectation-type (versus objective) measures of interview outcomes, the present results suggest that much of this research may be of questionable validity. Obviously, future research should explore the issues described above in greater depth.

The absence of differences between persons who rated their interviews as high in quality and those who rated them low in quality, for interviewer "talkativeness" is also of importance. While this finding may be a result of insufficient statistical power for the test of the effect (power=.42), it is consistent with results of previous research. Specifically, other studies (e.g., Alderfer & McCord, 1970) have found that interviewees prefer interviewers who let the interviewee talk at least one-half the time. As a consequence, if an interviewee perceives that his/her interviewer dominates their conversation by being too talkative, the interviewee may perceive the interview to be lower in quality than if the interviewer had talked less.

In addition, the results of the tests related to the second research question suggest some intriguing implications. These findings imply that interviewing experiences--number of screening interviews, number of on-site interviews, and extent of interviewing training--do not significantly impact an interviewee's perceptions of interview communication satisfaction or interviewer credibility and trust. This absence of significant effects would seem to indicate that social

comparison processes are minimal with respect to perceptions of communication in screening interviews, i.e., number of "comparison" interviews does not effect perceptions of interviewer credibility and trust, or interview communication satisfaction. On the other hand, it is possible that the extent of one's previous interviewing experiences does not affect an individual's actual interviewing performance.

The fact that status characteristics (i.e., personnel representative versus incumbant from the hiring department) did not significantly impact interviewee perceptions of interview communication satisfaction or interviewer credibility and trust, is somewhat contradictory to the results of previous research. However, unlike previous studies (e.g., Rogers & Sincoff, 1978; Fisher, at el., 1979) the present investigation did not manipulate interviewer status by paper-and-pencil methods, but rather was a naturally occurring manipulation. Thus, it may be that the results of previous studies are a byproduct of their artificial nature. Obviously, future research should explore this possibility.

Finally, while it was not possible to perform a regression analysis to answer the third research question, the zero-order correlations that were computed are of interest. Specifically, it is noteworthy that the composite credibility factors ("credibility" and "extroversion") were not significantly related to interviewees' expectations of a second interview offer. Moreover, as Table 4 shows, the only interviewer-related variables that were correlated significantly with expectations of a second interview were interviewer competence and

trustworthiness. Yet, the amount of variance being accounted for by these relationships, though statistically significant, is rather small (Trust: $r^2$=.04; Competence: $r^2$=.07). On the other hand, the correlation between interview communication satisfaction and expectations of a second interview is fairly large and accounts for a substantial amount of variance ($r^2$=.27). Thus, the results of this research are supportive of previous studies which have found associations between interviewee perceptions of interviewer competence and trust-like variables, and interviewee predictions of interview outcomes. However, findings also suggest that these relationships, while statistically significant, may not be as important in predicting interview outcomes as one's overall affective reactions to the interview as a communication transaction. Since only correlations were reported in this study, this hypothesis must be considered only as conjecture until future causal research has been conducted.

## Summary

This study attempted to determine for employment screening interviews the relationships among an interviewee's perceptions of interview communication satisfaction, interviewer credibility and trust, previous interviewing experiences, and a number of interview outcomes. Data were collected from students interviewing at a Business Placement Center subsequent to actual employment interviews. Results suggest that an interviewee's previous interviewing experiences, the status of the interviewer, and whether or not the interviewee is later offered a second interview, do not significantly effect perceptions of interview

communication satisfaction or interviewer credibility and trust. On the other hand, those persons who expect a second interview differ significantly on a number of perceptual dimensions from those interviewees who do not expect an offer. Finally, analyses indicate that interview communication satisfaction is most strongly related to (and for these data the best predictor of) expectation of a second interview offer.

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TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Interviewee Perceptions of Interviewer Credibility and Trust, and Interview Communication Satisfaction for Levels of Interview Outcomes

| Interviewee Perceptions of the Interviewer and Interview[a] | Interview Outcomes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Likelihood of a Second Interview[b] | | | | | | Actual 2nd Interview Offer[c] | | | | Interview Quality[d] | | | |
| | Likely | | Unlikely | | Uncertain | | Offer | | No Offer | | High | | Low | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Interviewer Credibility- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Character | 7.63 | 2.41 | 8.15 | 2.44 | 8.08 | 2.76 | 8.53 | 2.33 | 7.69 | 2.61 | 6.83 | 2.19 | 8.65 | 2.49 |
| Composure | 5.34 | 1.88 | 5.77 | 1.92 | 6.75 | 2.42 | 6.00 | 2.30 | 5.90 | 2.18 | 5.28 | 1.73 | 6.38 | 2.33 |
| Sociability | 13.38 | 4.91 | 14.08 | 5.53 | 14.38 | 4.52 | 14.47 | 5.73 | 13.72 | 4.70 | 12.03 | 3.43 | 15.18 | 5.32 |
| Competence | 12.09 | 4.22 | 15.30 | 4.44 | 13.50 | 4.31 | 12.73 | 5.32 | 13.14 | 4.11 | 10.90 | 2.92 | 14.85 | 4.57 |
| Energy | 7.09 | 1.71 | 8.00 | 2.24 | 7.04 | 1.94 | 7.27 | 2.09 | 7.22 | 1.90 | 6.59 | 1.76 | 7.73 | 1.88 |
| Talkativeness | 8.84 | 2.84 | 9.69 | 3.22 | 8.83 | 3.37 | 8.53 | 3.11 | 9.10 | 2.96 | 8.24 | 3.47 | 9.55 | 2.67 |
| Interviewer Trust | 15.19 | 4.42 | 17.07 | 5.35 | 18.04 | 5.39 | 17.73 | 4.89 | 16.67 | 5.24 | 14.48 | 4.84 | 18.03 | 4.71 |
| Communication Satisfaction | 27.00 | 11.48 | 43.00 | 7.56 | 32.42 | 8.91 | 29.60 | 11.49 | 32.94 | 11.69 | 22.97 | 5.13 | 38.38 | 10.44 |

[a] The lower the score on the dependent variables the more positive the response.

[b] Cell sizes for Likelihood of a Second Interview: Likely, n=32; Unlikely, n=13; Uncertain, n=24.

[c] Cell sizes for Actual Second Interview Offer: Offer, n=15; No Offer, n=51.

[d] Cell sizes for Interview Quality: High, n=29; Low, n=40.

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Interviewee Perceptions of Interviewer Credibility and Trust, and Interview Communication Satisfaction for Levels of Interviewing Experience

| Interviewee Perceptions of the Interviewer and Interview[a] | Interviewing Experience | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. Screening Interviews[b] | | | | No. Second Interviews[c] | | | | | |
| | Many | | Not Many | | None | | 1 - 2 | | 3 or more | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Interviewer Credibility- | | | | | | | | | | |
| Character | 7.63 | 2.76 | 8.15 | 2.26 | 7.44 | 2.34 | 8.62 | 2.70 | 7.44 | 2.36 |
| Composure | 5.69 | 2.39 | 6.15 | 1.89 | 5.13 | 1.71 | 6.85 | 2.54 | 5.48 | 1.67 |
| Sociability | 13.23 | 5.21 | 14.50 | 4.43 | 13.19 | 3.64 | 15.08 | 5.61 | 13.07 | 4.61 |
| Competence | 13.86 | 4.72 | 12.50 | 4.00 | 12.63 | 4.80 | 13.77 | 4.01 | 12.96 | 4.61 |
| Energy | 7.06 | 1.91 | 7.44 | 1.91 | 7.50 | 2.10 | 7.19 | 1.81 | 7.15 | 1.93 |
| Talkativeness | 8.63 | 3.16 | 9.38 | 2.98 | 9.38 | 3.52 | 8.81 | 3.12 | 8.96 | 2.85 |
| Interviewer Trust | 16.09 | 5.52 | 17.00 | 4.54 | 16.56 | 5.29 | 17.26 | 5.56 | 15.81 | 4.43 |
| Communication Satisfaction | 32.06 | 12.07 | 31.74 | 11.04 | 33.94 | 13.21 | 32.85 | 10.50 | 29.78 | 11.42 |

[a] The lower the score on the dependent variables the more positive the response.

[b] Cell sizes for Screening Interviews: Many, n=35; Not Many, n=34.

[c] Cell sizes for Second Interviews: None, n=16; One or Two, n=26; Three or More, n=27.

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Interviewee Perceptions of Interviewer Credibility and Trust, and Interview Communication Satisfaction for Levels of Interview Training and Status of Interviewer

| Interviewee Perceptions of the Interviewer and Interview[a] | Interviewer Training and Status of Interviewer | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Interview Training[b] | | | | | | Interviewer Status[c] | | | |
| | Considerable | | Some | | Inconsiderable | | Personnel | | Hiring Department | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Interviewer Credibility- | | | | | | | | | | |
| Character | 7.97 | 2.33 | 7.47 | 2.37 | 8.33 | 2.99 | 7.95 | 1.43 | 7.85 | 3.04 |
| Composure | 5.52 | 2.05 | 5.63 | 2.27 | 6.89 | 2.08 | 6.09 | 2.14 | 5.76 | 2.19 |
| Sociability | 13.87 | 4.95 | 13.74 | 3.59 | 14.05 | 6.07 | 13.32 | 2.57 | 14.27 | 5.97 |
| Competence | 12.81 | 4.67 | 12.74 | 4.65 | 14.28 | 3.77 | 14.09 | 4.24 | 12.09 | 4.12 |
| Energy | 7.52 | 1.96 | 6.74 | 1.73 | 7.33 | 2.03 | 7.92 | 1.62 | 7.19 | 1.93 |
| Talkativeness | 8.87 | 3.40 | 8.89 | 2.45 | 9.39 | 3.29 | 9.36 | 2.84 | 8.91 | 3.05 |
| Interviewer Trust | 16.81 | 5.54 | 15.95 | 4.38 | 16.61 | 5.17 | 17.32 | 4.13 | 15.52 | 5.67 |
| Communication Satisfaction | 31.29 | 10.64 | 30.68 | 9.79 | 34.39 | 14.74 | 32.86 | 10.07 | 30.97 | 13.36 |

[a] The lower the score on the dependent variable the more positive the response.

[b] Cell sizes for Interview Training: Considerable, n=18; Some, n=19; Inconsiderable, n=31.

[c] Cell sizes for Interviewer Status: Personnel, n=22; Hiring Department, n=33

TABLE 4

Zero-Order Correlations Among the Credibility Dimensions, Trust, Interview Communication Satisfaction and Likelihood of Receiving a Second Interview Offer[a]

| Variable | Compet. | Char. | Comp. | Sociab. | Energy | Talkative | Comm. Sat. | Trust | Like. 2nd Interview |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competence | -- | | | | | | | | |
| Character | .49 | -- | | | | | | | |
| Composure | .42 | .56 | -- | | | | | | |
| Sociability | .37 | .80 | .50 | -- | | | | | |
| Energy | .29 | .13* | .02* | .34 | -- | | | | |
| Talkativeness | .22 | .34 | .23 | .42 | .52 | -- | | | |
| Commun. Satis. | .46 | .49 | .33 | .50 | .29 | .27 | -- | | |
| Trust | .52 | .69 | .55 | .64 | .30 | .49 | .38 | -- | |
| Likelihood of Second Interview | .27 | .04* | .15* | .06* | .16* | .14* | .54 | .21 | -- |

[a] n=69

* All correlations, except for those identified by asterisks, are significant at least at $p<.05$.